Delhi, N. Y.
June 15, 1929

My dear Robert:

Not long before his death John Boyd, the noble Christian minister so long at Evanston, whose last days were not his happiest, wrote a letter to David S. Kennedy which the latter published abroad. He accused Kennedy of doing little but make his (Boydds) life very unhappy. I think the letter had justification though it did not penetrate Kennedy's skin.

I am moved after prayer and thought to write you a letter which may seem to you unkind. I may be in the role of a slave who stood behind Roman Emperors in the day of their triumph to remind them that they were mortal and human. As I have so often said, God endowed you with five talents which you have used to make ten. I know of no man more gifted than you. I never heard or read an utterance of yours that was not true to the Bible as I understand it. You always exalt our Lord Jesus Christ in your utterances. I do not forget your courtesy to me, especially your visit to Delhi which was a great honor and joy to me and all Presbyterians hereabouts. You stand today the most powerful ecclesiastic in our church. Whether this masterly ability deserves the full confidence of the church is quite another matter. You were a backer of Board consolidation which did little but increase waste and extravagance of money which you urge pastors to get from poor and humble people who give at great sacrifice. Those who are executives receive high salaries and deluxe expenses, are maintained in great comfort at full wage when long sick and finally retired at an annual pension far greater than any pastor can get. The consolidation put management of all Boards in hands of a few, remote from the church and has led to outrageous financial benefit to a few. You pushed the New Era which was a spread-eagle outburst which greatly profited our glib friend, Dr. Foulkes whom you and others now put on General Council, a very expensive piece of machinery. You were chief promoter of the Inter-church World Movement which was an utterly fantastic dream or deliberate piece of graft, costing the church over a million dollars finally landing in bankrpptcy causing Dr. Mott to flee to the country. Had it been in business there would have been at least exposure and disgrace but Dr. Mott continues his triumphant way. I was told at Clifton Springs of the trouble you made there and the pain that came to good David Bouvaird who suffered his life away. You pushed a drive against W. R. Moody through the Moody family did much to aid you and William was your friend for years, yet you broke his heart, denounced him in my hearing all for the sake of your son, concerning whom one hears various reports. Personally, I have a grievance. You side-stepped the matter when a foreign missionary extreme liberal blocked the desire to call my son to the pastorate of the Third Church, Rochester. Your letter regarding it was evasive. Now comes Princeton. Except for aid at 156 Dr. Stevenson would never have made so much ado. You and John McDowell, highly paid secretaries, suggested your real work which you claim is so arduous to straighten out that old institution from which McDowell did not have the brains to graduate. Stevenson had not ability nor do I believe he would have had the desire to rip things if you and McDowell had not bolstered him. Twenty men, of whom you are at least one of the chiefs, dictate everything in our church today. You resolved to put your friends in charge in Princeton. It was not theological. I never

sympathized with Craig et alii in that. It was personal envy, ambition, vindictiveness. My first desire was to retain matters in status quo and gain peace without vindictive victory but you and others would not have it so. With a shrewdness which one must admire you split the majority of the Board of Directors. You made a bluff of fairness and deceived some of us completely. In good faith I joined with you. You were gracious and plausible. Your speech before the Trustees was a masterpiece and had you repeated it at Assembly the Group report would have at least been voted on. I have been told by one who does not agree with me at all that your speech was weak, a plain sell out. You, Mudge, Stevenson, Finney, always wanted Thompson report. That was your full right but to play such a game, even getting the Katzenbach opinion only to split the majority was something else again. I do not know how much you had to do with picking the 33. Laird had seen a list as early as May 8 and I am sure you were not surprised at the selections. You told me in Delhi that you wanted to get off, but you are on and will stay on. You and a few others put up a great appearance of shrinking modesty but I notice you never decline.

I confess I am hurt and resentful that I am left off. I love Princeton Seminary. I enjoyed to get near the men who are on the Boards there. You who chose placed every group member except Brank and me on the Board, except Craig, omitted for obvious reasons. Your particular friend Patchinenn (whom I love and admire very much) and Emmons are on. You may say I have not brains, which I freely admit, but when I see such names as Manson and Pugh I conclude brains are not the only test.

There is a company centering in 156 who run overchurch today. Extravagance, Nepotism (How comes it that Dr. W. P. Finney draws $5000 salary and $1800 expense for doing practically nothing unless John M. T. had a hand in it? You are an able, powerful vrowd.

You will think me unduly ambition. How about your friend McAfee who has struggled and strained for Moderatorship for ten years? How about yourself who accepts all offered? How about Erdman who acted like a spoiled child when the ill-advised candidacy of Macartney was successful in 1924? O you people make me ill. You profess such indifference and then secure all positions of honor and trust you can get for yourselves and your little inner circle of friends.

I have served the church nearly 40 years as pastor. I have declined larger salaries than I ever received. I have done a wholesome work which proportionate to my ability is as great as yours. I am not afraid to face my Lord with my one talent entrusted any more than you fear your use of five. But a village pastor has no place in the circle of those who have responsibility and honor. You will look in vain for the name of a village or country pastor on any committee or Board appointed by the General Assembly. We are only to vote aye and nay and pound pennies from poor people that others may travel deluxe and draw generous salaries. If I retire at the age of 65 my generous church gives me $700. Dr. A. J. Brown or Dr. John Dixon retires on a generous pension of which nobody knows the size. I have given my best to Christ and to the Presbyterian Church. The church has no confidence in me, largely because I am a village pastor. You fellows meet often, plan for each other and forget the humbler brothers. I again say I am hurt, resentful at being left off Princeton Board, and especially because it has

been done with connivance of friends of long standing who profess to be far above politics. If you are satisfied I must be but I know that some day the present machine which is as hard-boiled as Tammany Hall will have to give an account of Stewardship.

Yours,

WCR:MAL

CABLE ADDRESS: "INCULCATE NEW YORK"

TELEPHONE WATKINS 8191

THE BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U. S. A.

156 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK

OFFICE OF SECRETARY

August 2, 1932
(Dict. July 19)

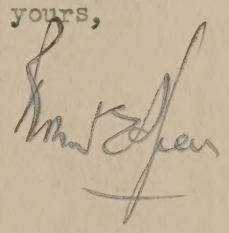
The Rev. W. Courtland Robinson, D. D.,
"The Presbyterian,"
1217 Market Street,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

My dear Court:

I enclose herewith an article with regard to the Clifton Springs Sanitarium. Would it be possible for you to find a place for this in "The Presbyterian?" As the article indicates, the Sanitarium is a purely benevolent and missionary institution. It is not a stock company, pays no dividends - all that it earns is spent on the institution itself and its benevolent and missionary service.

It will help if you could publish this article and enlarge in this way the paying clientele of the Sanitarium so that it may continue and enlarge its benevolent service.

Very cordially yours,



RES:AMW

August 9, 1932.

Dr. Robert E. Speer,
156 Fifth Avenue,
New York, N. Y.

Dear Dr. Speer:

I thank you very much for the article which will be printed in next week's issue.

Drs. Mudge and McEwan have taken me to task somewhat for the editorial "A Master Called to Speak" which you may have seen. I have confidence to believe you know that it was in no wise personal. I do think that a considerable company of our Church think that it is scarcely proper for master men to enter into debates upon problems which belong to the Assembly. I do not think the result would have been different had you not spoken but at the same time your masterful speech did fix it beyond a peradventure. I had several letters protesting against it and I have had three letters commending my editorial and the two I have mentioned taking me to task.

I believe you are too big to allow such things to affect you. I am in a very difficult situation. Like yourself, I have to meet the whims and fancies of men of many minds. I hope I did not do you wrong and I assure you that there is no one in the Church who esteems your goodness and ability more than I. I have thought it wiser to let the matter stop without further comment for I do not think it of enough importance to stir up any feeling. I do wish that by some means I could understand more fully the things in your minds and what the eminent leaders of the Church desire to do. I have had a prejudice against the Federal Council. It may be quite unjust but certainly my interviews with Dr. Cavert have been delightful in every way. I do not know whether I can always avoid stepping on toes or ~~nor~~ not. I think that if I knew beforehand what was in mind I could avoid many things in which I have blundered hitherto. Of course, I receive letters from many who do not like the present management of the Church. They do not affect me much for there are always such. I have some contacts with the Westminster people and they simply see nothing good but many of them are dear friends of

long standing and no doubt they affect me.

I thank you for your article and I am always glad when I receive any sign from you indicative of the friendship which I have cherished for lo these forty years. Your visit to Delhi was one of the high peaks of my whole life and I will never forget it.

Most cordially yours,

WCR*E

August 9, 1932.

Dear Family,

You will pardon a typewritten sheet as I am in a hurry. It is necessary for me to go to New York today. A plan has been proposed which may or may not bring relief to our situation in THE PRESBYTERIAN.

I got through the hot Sunday and listened to Barnhouse twice. Whatever may be his indiscretions, he is a remarkable man and certainly knows the Bible and uses it with great effect. I enjoyed two sermons exceedingly and the body of the church was filled both times which was to me very remarkable. There must have been five hundred people present at each service, more in the evening than in the morning.

I am so glad you are all together up at the old place and hope you have a wonderful time. I expect to arrive next Monday for ten days at least and perhaps longer. The meeting today will I think be very important. The proposition is a radical one but it may be a way out.

Dr. McEwan took me to task for my editorial on Robert Speer as did Dr. Mudge. I am getting used to that sort of thing and find I cannot please anybody but myself and I do not please myself very well. Mudge wrote me a very sharp letter but after my reply, wrote me a very kindly one and Speer himself sent an article to be printed. I think my editorial scared them a little but certainly I owe nothing to those two men and McEwan is absolutely devoted to them. I think he is so because he wishes to hold his position as President of the Princeton Board.

I am keeping very well indeed but the heat has been pretty hard even for the young ladies here who wear much less than I do. Money is very lacking but I think if the new arrangement can go through, we will see our way out. I do not anticipate spending the day in New York but that seems to be the order. Accept my love for each and all of you and my best wishes for your joy and complete rest.

Most lovingly yours,

CABLE ADDRESS: "INCULCATE NEW YORK"

TELEPHONE WATKINS 8191

THE BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U. S. A.

156 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK

OFFICE OF SECRETARY

The Rev. W. Courtland Robinson, D. D.,
"The Presbyterian,"
1217 Market Street, Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania.

August 12, 1932

My dear Court:

Your good letter of August 9 has been received. Dr. Mudge called my attention to the editorial in "The Presbyterian" to which you refer and showed me the letter which he had written to you with regard to it. I advised him not to pay any attention to the editorial and not to send you his letter. My judgment is that it is almost never worth while to enter into a controversy with a paper. It has every advantage which the private individual does not have, and no statement which it makes will ever be overtaken by any answer. Furthermore, so far as personal matters are concerned, either the truth will take care of itself or whatever injury may be inflicted I am disposed to look upon as part of the roughness in life that is good for one and that makes him a little more nearly humble-minded, as he ought to be.

Don't trouble yourself over this editorial on my account. You have said more than enough kind things in "The Presbyterian" about me to offset any criticism.

With regard to this particular matter, the simple fact, as Dr. Mudge wrote you, was that the Chairman of the Bills and Overtures Committee, in behalf of that Committee, in presenting a certain matter to the General Assembly, said that it was their desire that I should be called upon. With the assent of the Assembly, the Moderator proceeded to call upon me. I did not want to speak and would not have done so if I could have avoided it, but I am a servant of the General Assembly and an employee of one of its Boards. If I had declined to speak and the cause had been one that you favored, I think you would have criticized me for refusal.

I would not have written about this matter at all and am doing so now only in response to your kind letter.

I am glad of the opportunity, however, to write about two other matters.

1st. Why in the world did you print in your issue of August 11 a letter from a foreign missionary criticizing the Board for appointing Mr. Kerns who as your correspondent supposed was denying the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection. As you know, this original charge was unfounded, and the whole matter was cleared by the Presbytery of Washington itself in unanimously ordaining Mr. Kerns on the basis of his full acceptance of these and other doctrines of the church. All this was set forth in "The Presbyterian" itself by Dr. Eggleston. How could it possibly be just or fair to print this letter now without a single reference to the facts and to give currency again to the misrepresentations? Why could you not have sent the letter back to the writer with a copy of your paper containing Dr. Eggleston's statement of Mr.

Kerns' entirely satisfactory examination and his acceptance by the Presbytery?

The other matter is your idea that there is a cabal managing the Presbyterian Church, and I judge you think that I am a member of it. On the other hand, I do not believe there is any such cabal at present though I have known of the existence of groups that might be so characterized in the past. And as for my part in it, I do everything in my power to stay away from General Assembly meetings and from all the general administration of the church. When I have been drawn into the Presbyterian Seminary matter or the work of the Commission of Fifteen or questions of church union, it has been entirely without any initiative on my part and with every effort to get others enlisted instead. As any member of our Board will tell you, I am serving on the General Council against my constant protest.

I have only the slightest interest in organizations and institutions and administrations. I prefer to work with the spiritual forces and the invisible and intangible influences which are in the Truth.

I reciprocate all your feelings of friendship and good-will and have only kind judgments and best wishes for you always.

Very affectionately yours,

Robert E. Speer

RES:AMW

CABLE ADDRESS: "INCULCATE NEW YORK"

TELEPHONE WATKINS 8191

THE BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U. S. A.

156 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK

OFFICE OF SECRETARY

June 8, 1933

Rev. W. Courtland Robinson, D.D.,
Delhi, New York

My dear Cort:

I have just read with amazement the letter from Russell T. Barr which you print in "The Presbyterian" of June 8th with its statements about the Board of Foreign Missions "slapping Christ in the face;" - its "every effort to keep from the Assembly" the real facts; its declaration that the Board is insulting and repudiating our Lord; that if light were let in "it would not be quite so easy for Satan to sit in and dominate the councils of the Board of Foreign Missions, as he is evidently able to do now, without let or hindrance."

Can "The Presbyterian" possibly acquit itself of responsibility for publishing such statements as these?

I cannot find the name of Russell T. Barr on the roll of ministers and would like to believe that there is not one minister in the Presbyterian Church who would allow himself to make statements such as these. Will you please let me have Mr. Barr's address and tell me what you can about him? It is tragic that any member of our Church should allow himself to think thoughts or say words like these.

I was glad to see Stewart at the Assembly and have noted with interest his account of the proceedings. I sympathize very much with him in the matter of the report of the Committee on Polity with regard to the size of the Assembly. I think if there had been opportunity for one or two brief statements supporting him the overture might have been sent down. I think there were many in the Assembly who thought that they were actually voting to make a change in the constitution of the Church instead of only agreeing to submit the matter to the Presbyteries.

With kind regard,

Very cordially yours,

Robert E. Speer

RES:B

June 12, 1933.

Dr. Robert E. Speer,
156 Fifth Avenue,
New York, N. Y.

Dear Robert:

Your letter chastising me, is at hand. I do not know Russell T. Barr and do not recall endorsing the printing of the letter, though I doubtless did so. I thought the letter criticized me more than any of you. If I get a letter from Erdman, Ross Stevenson, McAfee or you, it is invariably a criticism of my course. It has all hurt and worn me out. You will be glad to know that by order of my physician, I am "down and out." Hereafter I will have no part whatever in editing THE PRESBYTERIAN. You men have been high in my esteem for forty years and I have tried to defend the Foreign Board. I have had no help from any of you.

My policy (mistaken no doubt) has been to allow anyone to say what he wishes in the section "What People Write." I think it wiser to let the most aggrieved say what he wishes. But that does not suit you people and I am sorry. But, of necessity, I am done. I cherish you and Drs. Erdman, and Stevenson but I am not equal to the task which I took reluctantly.

Please accept my regret and apology. I think I have not had full and fair treatment in all cases, but I can seek your forgiveness and crave your friendship.

Very truly yours,

W. COURTLAND ROBINSON.

WCR*E

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TELEPHONE WATKINS 8191

THE BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U. S. A.

156 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK

OFFICE OF SECRETARY

June 20, 1933
(Dict. June 15)

The Rev. W. Courtland Robinson, D. D.,
Delhi,
New York.

My dear Court:

On getting back this morning from the meeting of the Synod of Indiana I found your letter of June 12 and read it with deep sympathy and sorrow.

First of all let me relieve your mind of any thought that my feeling is any different from what it has been all these forty-eight years since we first met. I have the same warm and friendly feeling now as in those first days and in all the intervening years.

Secondly let me say how sorry I am for the difficult experience that you have had with The Presbyterian. Editorial work on a church paper is thankless work at the best and enormously difficult in days like these.

Thirdly let me say that there is no "Machen-Erdman-Speer fight." It takes two contestants to make a fight, and I will enter into no conflict or controversy with Dr. Machen. I have never said or written publicly anything about him and would not have answered his attack on the Board save that I was called on to do so before the Standing Committee on Foreign Missions at the General Assembly. Dr. Machen had ample opportunity to state his case, and he had already sent his pamphlet with no word of rebuttal from the Board in reply to every commissioner to the General Assembly. After hearing the whole mattter the entire Standing Committee of forty-five members unanimously decided against him in the most positive and unqualified way, with the exception of two young men who, it appeared, had been put on as his representatives and who acted both in the Committee and in the Assembly evidently under his instructions. I have reason to think that one of these has not had an easy mind with regard to the matter since. There will be no answer from me so far as I can now judge to anything that Mr. Machen or Christianity Today may say. I do not believe that such controversy can be pleasing to our Master or helpful to His church.

With regard to Mr. Barr's letter in the Presbyterian I have been told that he embezzled funds belonging to one of the churches in Germantown. When called before the Session he confessed his theft but said that he needed the money and had used it. If this is true about him I can well understand the language and tone of his wicked letter in The Presbyterian.

It was very good to see Stewart at Columbus. He evidently did good work as secretary of the Committee on Polity, but he wasn't adequately backed up in presenting the matter of the reduction of the Assembly. I think a plain, simple, three-minute speech in his support would have sufficed to show the Assembly that it ought not to deny the Presbyteries the right to pass upon the wise proposal which you have long advocated of a reduction of

the size of the Assembly.

Don't feel discouraged at laying down The Presbyterian. Rather rejoice that these loads are now laid off and that you can be free for the richest ministry of your life, in prayer and personal spiritual service. Don't let any cloud of gloom settle on you, but go on for the years that remain with a light and joyous heart. And don't think for a moment that every old friendship that was true won't hold still to the end.

With best wishes always -

Very cordially yours,

Robert E. Speer

RES:AMW

I was at Princeton yesterday to see our younger son graduate. What memories came back!